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Some allege it acts mechanically, by pulverizing the soil. Others assert its efficacy, by promoting vegetation by the high excitement it affords.

On Hay-making in general, and particularly in wet weather. By Mr. James Milner, of Scorton, near Catterick, in Yorkshire.

THE various treatises that are extant on this subject, seem to be written by gentlemen farmers, who have not had sufficient manual practice in the art, or by practical farmers, who are in general deficient in writing in a clear and scientific manner on the subject, though very conversant and knowing in practice.

As I have had very extensive practice for near fifty years in the art of hay-making, and have paid great attention to the various methods made use of in all the northern counties, in some of the midland ones, and also those near the metropolis, I may lay a claim at least to experience resulting from a variety of observations, trials, and comparisons.

I shall now proceed to give an account of hay-making as it is practised in Wensley Dale, a valley situated about fifteen miles south-west of Richmond, Yorkshire, nearly twenty miles in length, and five or six on an average in breadth, where the soil for pasture and meadows is extremely rich; land there fifty years since let at two pounds a statute acre, though far from any good market town.

Respecting the cutting of grass, the method is nearly the same throughout Great Britain; but good practical farmers prefer cutting it very low rather than highish, because they say it vegetates much sooner and grows much quicker, after low-cut grass than high-cut; the crops therefore of both the hay and

after-grass will be greater. The day after it is cut in Wensley Dale it is strewn with the hands in such a regular and even manner, that no sops or lumps of grass appear on the surface. Neither forks nor rakes are used in this part of the work, except where the grass is very light indeed. This method requires industry and care, but when it is well executed the hay is half won. The next process, the day after, if the weather be fine, is to turn it with the rake head, in a very neat and regular order. The day after, if the weather be fine, they put it into hand, or lap-cocks. One raker, man or woman, for both are expert at the business, goes before a cocker; each cocker takes up about ten or twelve pounds weight of hay, shakes it up very lightly, then puts one hand a little under it, and the other on the side of it, takes it up and sets it down again gently where it is clean-raked, in a neat regular row, leaving an aperture or hole about the middle in the side of the cock, so as to admit air in case of wet weather; always making them even and smooth at the top. Cocks made well in this manner, will, on account of their lightness and smoothness, certainly repel the rain, and throw it off better than any large cocks, heaped up carelessly and hastily, as they generally are, with the rake or the fork; besides, in wet weather they dry considerably sooner, on account of their lightness and good shape, and will stand better than larger made cocks, even in windy weather. This seems rather paradoxical, but it is a certain fact: for when the wind takes hold of a larger, badly made cock, it will sometimes hurl it into the air, and perhaps carry it into another person's premises, whereas the small, well made lap, or hand-cock, remains in security, receiving very little damage, though it had stood the blasts

of several tempests. This part of hay-making, I am fully persuaded, from long experience, and a variety of observations in different counties, is preferable to any I have ever yet seen.

The farmers consider the hay in this state, *i. e.* in good lap-cocks, as nearly won, and will never venture to spread it about again, though it wants a little drying or hardening, till they see the greatest probability of a fine day, when they again, if the prospect be favourable, about eleven o'clock, spread it out regularly with the hands in the same manner as strewing it; it is then tedded, or put into rows, and carried in sledges to be stacked. Taking it off the ground in sledges is not perhaps so ready as sweeping, but the sweep injures the hay much more by the different lumps or rolls of hay that it has collected, which very frequently mould, and injure several parts of the stack or rick.

The Wensley Dale farmers likewise are superior in point of making their ricks, &c. They seldom make long ricks, as in the south, but round ones, nearly cylindrical, till they are about two-thirds of its height; then a conical form takes place; then the rick is carried up to such a regular point, and roped so closely and nicely, that neither wind nor water can penetrate: in short the ricks are less injured by time or tempest than those that are covered with straw, which is the common practice in most counties. The reason is evident, because the stacks that are covered with straw are seldom carried regularly to a top; they are generally too broad there, and the straw is then laid on very injudiciously, and without method: the rick, consequently, in time takes water, and a considerable part of it becomes putrified litter. By the carelessness of servants, and the want of a judicious and philosophical knowledge in most

farmers respecting the figure and finishing of ricks, their losses cannot but be considerable. The true figure of what is generally called a round stack, or rick, is at the bottom part the lower frustum of a spheroid; nearly at the middle the diameter is about one-eighth greater; then it is gradually raised, and finished in a neat conical manner. Perhaps it may be asked, why the Wensley Dale farmers are so celebrated throughout all the northern counties for hay-making? Wensley Dale is, perhaps, one of the worst situations in England for winning hay soon, being totally surrounded with high hills; that on the south is the noted Penny Hill; and there is another called Wherring-side, at about one mile distance from it, thirteen feet higher, though seldom mentioned in history. These hills powerfully and frequently attract the clouds, which cause considerable more rain to fall there than in a level champaign country. These disadvantages, added to a great desire of winning their hay crops well, as they have very little corn, long since incited the farmers to pursue various methods, and to make comparative trials, till at last they decisively and justly concluded the present method eligible and preferable; and by the invariable practice of which they acquired their acknowledged and merited celebrity in hay-making. It will be hardly credited, perhaps, when I say, that fifty years back the men received there for their daily labour two shillings and sixpence, the women one shilling and sixpence, and the boys and girls, from ten to fourteen years old, one shilling each, including their victuals, which in the hay-harvest were always good, and in great plenty; for they eat no less than five or six times a day; this fully shows their peculiar attention both to their labourers and hay-harvest, and also

their wish to excel in the art. Their working hours in Wensley Dale are certainly longer than in most other places; but when people can and are willing to work long hours, they undoubtedly merit extra wages, and both the master and his labourers are ultimately and mutually benefited: for it is a general and just observation, that if hay be neglected, and not won in proper time, a considerable part of its nourishing qualities will be greatly injured, and consequently incalculable losses sustain-

ed. In dry weather, where the grass was very heavy, I have often seen hay, by stowing and cocking it in the above manner, won two days sooner than other farmers have won theirs, who were careless and followed no regular plan in these two principal points, stowing and cocking; and I have moreover seen, particularly in long wet weather, hay made in this regular and, as it were, philosophical manner, won sooner by three or four days than by any other process whatever.

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